

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Contact:

Brooke King, Executive Director

The Intergenerational School

Work: 216-721-0120

Cell: 216-571-4732

BKing@tisonline.org

**The Intergenerational School,
1 of 7 schools nationwide recognized by the U.S. Dept of Education,
cited as “bringing new meaning to lifelong learning.”**

Cleveland—October 1, 2007—

The Intergenerational School (TIS) on Cleveland’s east side, is one of only seven K-8 charters in the entire country to be featured in the U.S. Department of Education’s *K-8 Charter Schools Guide: Closing the Achievement Gap*, out last week. The publication profiles seven of the nation’s most innovative and successful charter schools serving at-risk populations, and highlights common practices among them. The report is free and available for order or download at <http://www.ed.gov/about/pubs/intro/innovations.html>.

Based on preliminary data from over 3,000 charter schools operating nationwide, TIS was one of just a few showing solid evidence of closing the achievement gap. Therefore it was chosen to undergo a detailed comprehensive analysis conducted by the Department of Education’s Office of Innovation and Improvement. The extensive review incorporated an on-site evaluation and interviews with stakeholders including parents and staff. TIS’s truly unique educational model and non-graded curriculum, designed by Dr. Catherine Whitehouse, stood out as a bellwether example of innovation in public education. The developmental curriculum and school culture, although in alignment with state content standards, breaks down age-segregation barriers and industrial concepts of traditional education. What results is an individually tailored education addressing each learner’s unique needs and capabilities. Housed in Fairhill Center, a nonprofit collaborative campus dedicated to successful aging, TIS currently serves the families of 144 students grades K-8, along with over 200 “life-long learners” throughout the Cleveland community.

TIS continues to gain more attention as an innovative and successful public education program. Locally, TIS was part of a select group of schools to be involved in the Cleveland Excellent Schools Project funded by The Cleveland Foundation. A team of researchers from Teachers College at Columbia University visited the school and a report is forthcoming. The school is the only charter in Ohio to be rated Excellent for 4 consecutive years. Nationally, TIS was included in the Center for Education Reform’s 2007 publication *Stories of Inspiration, Struggle, and Success*. TIS was also recently featured in the *The Achiever* (the U.S. Dept. of Education’s newsletter), in an article entitled: “Bridging the Gap, Ohio Charter School Surmounts Age,

Achievement Barriers.” (The article is available at the following web address: <http://www.ed.gov/news/newsletters/achiever/2007/0907.html>.) Deputy Secretary of Education, Raymond Simon visited TIS last spring as part of National Charter Schools Week, and in August a group of 40 Japanese professionals working in the field of aging traveled to the school to learn more about the array of intergenerational programming and the benefits for both the children and older adults.

Although TIS receives the same per pupil amount of tax payer revenue as all public schools (\$5,565 per student), it operates on less than 2/3 of a traditional district school’s funding. Charter schools receive no local tax money and have the additional expense of facilities leasing costs (amounting to about 15% of TIS’s budget). Most district schools rely on local taxes to make up about 40% of their total operating budgets and do not pay rent for the buildings in which they operate. TIS operates on a slim budget, but still manages to keep classes very small, at about 16 students. An average class of 16 yields \$89,040 in per pupil income, while a class of 25 or more (common in district schools) yields \$139,125—over \$50,000 more in revenue *per classroom!*

Another common problem charter schools face due to lack of funding is the inability to pay their teachers commensurate with their district counterparts. Although this is true at TIS, the school works hard to ensure that the teachers are supported by the administration and are empowered to make professional decisions in the best interest of their students. What results is a mission-driven atmosphere where TIS staff (both faculty and administration) work above and beyond for one common goal: to create an educational community of excellence for learners of all ages. Last year all teachers renewed their contracts, and 6 of 10 returning teachers were entering their 6th or 7th year with TIS.

For the past 3 years, 100% of TIS 3rd graders have passed the Ohio Reading Achievement Tests, and many have scored accelerated or advanced. While test scores alone are not adequate measures of success, parent satisfaction, teacher retention, and ongoing research on benefits of the TIS programs for older adults are all contributing to the positive buzz. Essentially, TIS is doing far more for its students, with fewer resources.

TIS plans to expand over the next few years to serve more life-long learners in Cleveland, and recently received a grant from The Cleveland Foundation to develop a capacity building plan. TIS is an independent, free-standing 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization (not run by a for-profit educational management company). It is a free public school and has open enrollment on a space-available basis, yet currently, there is a waiting list. For more information about the school, call 216-721-0120 or visit www.TISonline.org.

###